

Halo: This Time With Feeling

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Summary: Finally able to mass a counter attack with the new revival of Harvest, the Covenant now have to split their forces in order to take on both the forces of Earth and Harvest. No Spartans involved, multiplayer map based. Read review to understand first.

1. Chapter 1

Chapter 1: Engage!

0753 hours July 16th, 2554 (military calendar)

Epsilon Eridani System, Planet Harvest

UNSC Supply Base 223 "Sidewinder"

It is Year 2554; the Covenant Hierarchy is getting extremely impatient with their delays of the destruction of Earth. Harvest, a planet once lost to the Covenant has been restored to its former glory under the Covenant radar, and now is the military outpost that is twice as much as Reach had been, producing the deadliest ships in the UNSC's Fleet.

It is now, however, discovered and is a primary target to the Covenant. Battles now rage in orbit around Earth and Harvest. The humans' counterattack took the alien race by surprise, and now, with more morale than ever, the humans understand that they have a fighting chance.

The fact that the enemy was so damn close had Admiral Richard Hastten at worry for nearly the entire morning. The young Admiral had been on edge, ever since Fleet Admiral Sir Terrence Hood had promoted him from Lieutenant. And, since Hood had left to defend Earth, Hastten had been the highest ranking officer in the installation; thus leaving the newly promoted officer in command. Right now, he really wished he'd never been. Hastten ran his hands through his orange-cropped hair, and his blue eyes showed all signs of

worry.

The UNSC Supply Installation-holding 4 of UNSC supplies- was built inside a canyon on the pole region of Harvest, which had just grown its population back thanks to Admiral Stanforth's campaign to save the planet. "Sidewinder" as the Marines had dubbed it, was a long, snowy, cold as hell canyon with two bases at both ends, and one outpost in the middle, which opened the meter thick blast doors at either end. The Admiral still didn't feel safe, even with reinforced concrete and Titanium-armor, as well as one MAC gun per base and the canyon with symmetrically designated Gauss and LAAG turrets placed around the long stretch.

Hastten walked over to a console and inspected the surrounding area, which was ten kilometers in radius on radar. Right on the edge of the ten kilometers was twenty-three large red dots, approaching slowly. Hastten had the base on full alert, had every marine inside the base, and kept the turrets manned as well as the Magnetic Accelerator Cannons hot. According to the radar, the force assaulting the base was twenty-three Covenant drop-ships, packed to the max with Covenant soldiers, no doubt. Losing this base would be a crippling loss for the UNSC and losing wasn't an option.

Then again, losing was never an option in Hastten's eyes. It never was an option in the eyes of any UNSC officer.

There was a small beeping from the NAV console as the Covenant approached another kilometer. "Weapons station one, the MAC guns are hot, right?" the Admiral addressed a new Lieutenant who had just taken Hastten's place on the Weapons console. The new officer had spunk, and he was a brave soldier as well. He was young, and although his hair was a half- inch longer than protocols applied, followed the marines' code down to the letter. He was scrawny, and at first glance, wasn't very soldierly looking. Looks were deceiving however, as William Harrison was fearless in the eyes of his opponents. Admiral Hastten didn't think he'd have anyone else on Weapons Station.

Lieutenant William Harrison replied "Aye, sir, MAC cannons hot 'n ready to blow the shit out of any Covenant ship, sir."

Admiral Hastten smiled "Very good, remember to keep all turrets around this base to stay on high alert. Lieutenant Jaggers, how far until the Covenant reach this station?"

"Sir, it'll take approximately forty minutes before the Covenant set foot on this installation." Jaggers replied

"Set foot, huh?" the Admiral snorted "They be a meaty pulp before they touch ground. Thank you, Lieutenant."

Jaggers had just flown in from space around Reach, just transferred from Captain Keyes vessel for cowardliness in the face of the enemy. Admiral Hastten still didn't know if he could trust the officer, but he had served fine so far. Then again, they had been in almost no battles, and the "battles" they had been in were just simple skirmishes. He was a very pessimistic officer, with short, brown hair and a slightly stocky build/

All around he saw fear, anger, emotionless, or placid faces on deck,

whether it be a marine or the techie on a station. The Admiral tried his best to hide his fearful face from those who looked his way, because when the commanding officer was worried, that meant others would worry and that was the last thing a newly promoted Admiral needed.

"Sir," Jaggers cried, "Covenant are picking up speed, I'll recalculate the approximate time of their arrival."

"Do it!" Hastten barked, "Weapons station one, tell all weapons to face course zero-zero-three."

"Aye, sir, weapons facing course zero-zero-three." William replied

Jaggers finally said "Covenant are arriving at near full speed, it'll be twenty-minutes before they arrive."

The admiral nodded then walked over to the intercom and touched the button. There was a crackling noise as it came on. If the Covenant were packed to the max as Hastten thought they would be, then he would have to rely on sheer tactics to defend it. "Jaggers, give me the intercom, now!" Admiral Hastten barked.

"Aye, sir," Jaggers clicked a series of commands on his keyboard "OK, sir, the intercom is all yours."

Admiral Hastten spoke "OK marines, as you are no doubt aware, the Covenant is en-route to this station. They will arrive in approximately twenty-minutes. I want as many Scorpion tanks and as many Warthogs as we can get in front of each blast door. Plant lotus anti-tank mines in front of the blast doors behind you as well. Ladies, Gentlemen. Good luck, Admiral Hastten out."

"Sir, preparations have begun," William said, wiping the sweat off his face. "I have all Gauss and LAAG turrets ready to open up."

"Excellent, Lieutenant, Lieutenant Jaggers, what's the estimated arrival of the Covenant now?"

"Ten minutes encouning, sir. They keep on picking up speed." Jagger's hands danced across the keyboard.

The Admiral nodded "Assemble the marines, pronto. We'll need every able-bodied soldier fighting. Head count, Jaggers?"

"We have aroundâ€|Two-hundred-sixty-five marines and seven ODST teams of six."

"Excellent," Hastten laced his hands behind his back "Time to blow the shit out of the enemyâ€|"

Behind his back his fingers crossed in a fervent prayer.

Orbital Drop Shock Trooper Corporal Jared Jacques of slapped a fresh clip into his BR55 Rifle, examined his belt for his pistol, and double-checked his grenades. He wasn't doing this as a checkup, he'd already done that, the truth was; it was this process that cleared his mind the easiest. Around the hangar, men and women prepped for

combat, a massive Scorpion Tank rolled by, along with several Warthogs. Word was Covenant was headed to Sidewinder, with a force that was sure as hell to overcome it. Jared's face was smiling like he had all the morale in the world, like he was ready to kick Covenant ass.

Truth was he was as scared as a cat hearing a loud crack of thunder.

He sighed and got up, right as the intercom came on. The familiar voice of the installation's new commander, Admiral Hastten broke through the brief issue of static "OK marines, as you are no doubt aware, the Covenant is en-route to this station. They will arrive in approximately twenty-minutes. I want as many Scorpion tanks and as many Warthogs as we can get in front of each blast door. Plant lotus anti-tank mines in front of the blast doors behind you as well. Ladies, Gentlemen. Good luck, Admiral Hastten out."

He slung his rifle over his shoulder and jammed his hands in his pockets "Good luck my ass." Jared grumbled as he walked over to a stationary Scorpion tank and sat on the treads.

His feet dangled as he began to review the first day he engaged the Covenant threat.

The blast door broke open and a wave of plasma tore through the smoke, ripping through human flesh and the cover they hid behind. Jared watched as men he trained with and for died, dropping to the deck like stones or clutching their wounds in complete agony. Jared felt a surge of adrenaline as he popped out from cover and unleashed a grenade followed by a lethal volley of SMG rounds. Several Covenant soldiers fell dead or mortally wounded.

The Covenant soldiers took notice of his act and sent streams of plasma his way. Plasma singed his suit and burned his body until his legs gave out and he dropped to the deck issuing a distinct cry of pain before he blacked out.

Jared snarled as he looked at his scars. He remembered them saying he was going to die, oh no, not Jared Jacques. ODST to the core, he willed himself to live and continued serving until now. This was only his third engagement against the Covenant. The UNSC Supply Post had the forces to successfully defend, then why was he so twitchy?

"Hey, mate, calm down wouldja, watchin' you's makin' me scared."

Jared looked around for the voice, until finally his gaze settled on the driver of the Scorpion tank.

"You're talking to me?" Jared asked, blinking in surprise.

"Sure am, mate, why you so scared, eh? Those Covenant SOB's 'll get what they deserve trust me." He hit the ignition and the massive vehicle came to life, rumbling through the deck plates and vibrating through Jared's body. The marine patted his vehicle's armor, smiling.

"Th' names Vincent Skiborough." The young Australian driver said, popping the hatch. He extended his hand, which Jared firmly

shook.

"Jared Jacques," Jared replied, releasing his grip "I'm ODST, you a marine?"

"Uh-huh, hardcore marine to you, mate," he spat on the deck "I've blasted through Covenant lines as thick as blast door in front of us and have had my body burnt all around. I'm still alive and kickin' in those SOB's faces." He winked at Jared.

Suddenly, the klaxons began their shrill scream and everywhere flashed red. Jared hopped off the tanks treads and darted over to a nearby camera console. Vincent followed. One the camera, the Gauss and LAAG turrets lit up the sky with magnetic bursts and peppered shadowy figures in the snowy cannon, to an enemy Jared could barely make out. Just then, a flaming Covenant U-Shaped drop ship careened over the canyons edge, and smashed straight into an adjacent wall. Not before, however, the side doors opened and several Elites, Jackals, and Grunts jumped out. Two unharmed drop ships followed, then several more that were bathed in turret fire. Three exploded before their load could be dropped, and mangled bodies dropped dead from the sky.

There were now nineteen Phantom and U-Shaped drop ships in the air with more than half- releasing their soldiers. Seventeen of the symmetrically designated forty-five turrets were swallowed in plasma fire, and then engulfed in an explosion. "OK, I WANT ALL MARINES READY TO KICK ASS! QUADRUPLE TIME!" a Sergeant appeared from nowhere, barking commands.

Jared's adrenaline spiked to a critical level as everyone around him sprung into action. The Covenant had touched foot on base. The battle had begun.

Jared unslung his battle rifle and ran over to the Scorpion tank where his friend sat, punching in a series of buttons before he glanced up at Jared, smiling. "They've come, and when they break open that door, I'll give them one holy hell!"

Jared patted his rifle "Save some fun for me, would you? My rifle doesn't like it when she can't shoot live targets."

"Oh there'll be plenty, mate." Vincent said, and shut the hatch intently focusing on the blast door.

Jared heard marines shouting orders to get Lotus anti-tank mines on the rear blast door. Jared hopped off the tank and took cover the slot between the vehicles treads. He checked his ammo again to clear his mind "I'll make it through this, just like I did before, there is no way I'm gonna die today, no way, no how."

He peeked around the heavily armored tread and zoomed through his rifle's scope, as intent as his friend was to opening up as soon as one of the inhuman SOB's poked their heads out. Then he realized just how quiet the room was, save the Scorpion and Warthogs engines rumbling. Sweat slithered down Jared's cheek and into his jacket. It was pure quiet until the intercom burst out and a loud scream issued through static "There breaking through damn it," the was a brief moment of gunfire then the frantic voice continued "Hangar One is lost! We're pulling out to number two!"

"Roger Corporal, pull your team back to our position," the Sergeant spoke through an unencrypted comm link "We'll be ready for you."

"Aye, sir pulling ba- Arrrrgh! Ah, shit no, get ready there comin-" static fuzzed through the intercom.

"Damnâ€|" the Sergeant muttered.

Just then, a brief white flash outlined the blast door, and pieces of it flew everywhere in heated slag form. Vincent pulled the trigger, which sent a spray of bullets ripping into the smoke, the LAAG turrets followed suit. There was what seemed like hundred screams of agony, then the smoke cleared to reveal a massive Covenant force aiming straight at them.

Jared froze up.

"God damn it all!" Vincent shouted, and pulled the primary weapons trigger. A missile shot from the Scorpions barrel, then exploded in the middle of the Covenant force, sending mangled bodies everywhere. He pressed it again. More bodies flew. Then the Covenant sent a stream of plasma his way. The plasma collided with the thick armor, melting through the treads like fire through paper.

"Oh, hell, no!" he popped the hatch and rolled out behind a barrier, just as a plasma grenade landed in his seat, and exploded in a bright white flame. The massive tank shut down, fire sprang out the engine. Jared made a run for it. He lifted his BR55 rifle and let three bursts fly through the air and into a blue elites head. The first six bullets collided with the shield, and then it flickered and died allowing the others to pass into the alien's skull.

Marines had fire coming from the muzzle of their weapons, sending more hell into hell itself. The Covenant responded in kind. Jared took cover as the tank burst into flame; he keyed Vincent "Hey, you still alive?"

"Alive, and kicking!" Vincent gasped, letting his SMG's drain bullets into the crowd of Covenant.

"Well that's good news," Jared peeked out, aimed and shot. Three rounds collided into the side of a shielded Jackals head. The alien slammed into a nearby grunt that was about to throw a plasma grenade, but dropped it in the collision. A blue-white flame vaporized the two.

"Nice shot," Vincent complemented while he discarded both his SMG's and picked up a dead marines battle rifle, sending a burst into an explosive barrel. Shrapnel and flame tore those unfortunate enough to stand next to it.

"My complements," Jared examined the room, realizing how many comrades were dead on the floor "We can't win this fight as we are, we'll need a rocket launcher or something explosive, like an-"

"Lotus Anti-tank mine?" Vincent finished for him

"Yeah one of those would do."

"Say no more, I'll disarm it then bring it to you." Vincent retreated to the rear blast door, careful not to draw attention to himself.

Jared covered his back. He asked, "How long is it going to take you to disarm that thing?"

"Wait a minute! I got it, cover me as I head to your position." Vincent broke off in a sprint, willing his legs to elongate as he flew across the hangar. Plasma followed in his wake. He skidded to a halt a few inches from Jared, gained his balance- smiling -the showed Jared the disk.

"Good, now set the timer for five seconds and give it to me." Jared commanded.

Vincent clicked a few buttons and a digital 5 appeared on it "Here you go!"

Jared switched his comm to an all around frequency and screamed "FIRE IN THE HOLE!" and tossed the disk like a Frisbee.

â€| 4â€| every marine backed from the door, weapons blaring.

â€| 3â€| the disk landed and skidded to a halt at a zealot's foot.

â€| 2â€| the alien warbled in surprise as he began to back away.

â€| 1â€| Jared took cover and closed his eyes.

There was an enormous explosion, obliterating everything in a twenty-foot radius, even the elite commander. Covenant where thrown everywhere like rag dolls as explosive barrels caused a chain reaction.

Jared shouted over the chaos "Counterattack!"

Marines and ODST troopers emerged from cover, taking aim at any alien dumb enough not to take cover. Jared watched as two marines mowed down an elite with SMG's in each hand. The alien's; realizing their attack had failed, retreated deeper into the building. Several teams followed.

"We need cleanup teams in those halls now!" the Sergeant barked.

Jared and Vincent formed up and began their march into the corridors that honeycombed the canyon walls. "Its cleaning time!" Jared whooped, "Let's go kick some alien ass!"

Akas 'Putomee, a zealot in the Covenant forces, stood in a phantom drop-ship with his arms crossed, a cape draping down his back and an energy sword blazing to life in his right hand. Altogether, he looked rather intimidating, especially when he was angry.

Right now, he was angry.

"How did the invasion go?" 'Putomee's deep voice broke the irritable silence.

"According to the leader, it failed. The humans managed to break our lines."

'Putomee banged the wall with his left hand and signaled an Elite in black armor "Commander 'Duramee, go and purge the infidels inside, this base must fall at all costs."

"My lord, what if we could bombard the base and force the humans out?" 'Duramee proposed, intent on examining his carbine.

"A rather ungraceful method of victory," 'Putomee smiled "Excellent idea. How many turrets do we have remaining?"

"We have one operational, one gone, and the other needs repairs." Another Elite replied.

"Thenâ€|" 'Putomee trailed "We shall send a team inside to lure them out, in which we shall bombard their front entrance trapping them outside for good, then all that remains is-"

"Extermination." 'Duramee finished.

'Putomee laughed, "Excellent work, now assemble your team and chase them out. I love killing trapped prey."

'Duramee bowed "Lord," And descended down into the snowy cavern below with several others.

"How are preparations going, taking the other base?" 'Putomee asked.

"That base is already under our control." The Elite replied.

"Excellent, now all we need to do is as planned, then we have a foothold on this filthy human inhabited planet!"

The other Elites scowled as they were deployed.

Uyo 'Duramee landed deftly on the snow and swept the area with his carbine before he activated his camouflage. "Time to die, infidels."

â€|. To be continued in Chapter 2: Coagulationâ€|

2. Chapter 2

Chapter 2:Coagulation

1304 hours July 17th, 2554 (military calendar)

Epsilon Eridani System, Planet Harvest

Guarded route to city New Catalina, Coagulation

It is Year 2554; the Covenant Hierarchy is getting extremely impatient with their delays of the destruction of Earth. Harvest, a planet once lost to the Covenant has been restored to its former glory under the Covenant radar, and now is the military outpost that is twice as much as Reach had been, producing the deadliest ships in the UNSC's Fleet.

It is now, however, discovered and is a primary target to the Covenant. Battles now rage in orbit around Earth and Harvest. The humans' counterattack took the alien race by surprise, and now, with more morale than ever, the humans understand that they have a fighting chance.

A few miles off the border of New Catalina, lay the interception route called 'Coagulation' by its marine inhabitants. The site was a large canyon with a collapsed wall facing the north, opposite of the city. Two bases sat on either end, with underground tunnels connecting the two; both were well protected by AA guns that were randomly scattered along the canyon's length.

Inside the base, the marines were performing the same routine they did everyday, completely oblivious to the fact that a Covenant assault wave was coming towards Harvest.

"Shit," complained a dark haired PFC Latvia Canings as she slapped the cards down on the table "I only got a pair."

Another blond marine tagged Gun. Sgt. J.D. Damien, laughed aloud as he tossed his cards on to the table "Don't feel bad, I just lost thirty-six bullets for my battle rifle! I got nothing in my hand."

That left two more marines left, a dark-tanned, black haired Mexican called Corporal Manne Toledo, and the light-hearted carrot cropped Lieutenant Dante Sinclair. "If you wanna bet now boy, do it." Sinclair mocked, smiling as he eyed the pile of bullets. He pulled out two BR55 cartridges and added them to the small mountain pile.

The Corporal had played well all game and was holding on to his last two cartridges. He pulled out two cartridges as well "I meet your seventy-two bullets, lay it down, I've got a Flush,_ sir!_"

The Lieutenant gave a short-laugh "I've got a Straight, read 'em and weep!" he pulled the pile toward him.

Manne rocked the chair with his hands buried in his face "That's bu' shit, man! How the hell did I lose with a Flush?"

J.D. replied, "Because you SUCK! Ha-ha-ha!"

"Two words, pal: Fuck and you." Manne snorted, lifted himself up and walked over to the wall and peeked around the corner "Where the hell is Kyle, eh? Shouldn't he be working radar?"

"No, I told him to go underground and head to the barracks and work radar there, knowing the barracks their probably partying their very own asses off and not paying attention. Don't worry I'm expecting confirmation of his arrival any minute now." Dante replied.

"Oh." said Manne, taking a swig of his canteen, which was actually full of alcohol.

J.D. grunted as he sat down " Whose up for another round?"

"Hold on a sec, while I check on the snipers." Dante went around the corner engaged in a conversation.

"I'm outta bullets," Latvia complained, then blinked as J.D. handed her three cartridges "Thanks, where'd you get the bullets?"

"El-Tee's pile." J.D. smiled, winking.

Dante came around the corner and sat down "Snipers are okay, let's play!"

There was a clank as metal struck metal "What the hell was that?" Latvia said, looking over her shoulder at the trap door leading to the tunnels "No one saw anything did they?"

"Probably the guys in the next room over," J.D. suggested grinning over his hand "The techies probably crashed something."

Everyone at the table but her was drooling over their hands.

Latvia glanced uncertainly at the trap door, and then shrugged "Whatever."

And the marines' normal routine continued.

Lance Corporal Kyle Vernon cursed as the lights short-circuited in the eerie tunnels that connected the two bases. Kyle never liked the accursed stretch anyway, it was way to creepy, and the distant groan of the pipes made him extremely uncomfortable. He fumbled for his flashlight and flicked it on, continuing through. He forced himself to whistle as his boots clanking on the metal plates was adding to the mountain of creepiness.

In the distance, he heard another pair of feet come slowly towards his direction. Kyle's tension decreased at the thought of another man down here other than himself. He turned his flashlight in that direction. Nothing.

Kyle cocked an eyebrow. Whipping the flashlight around he turned behind him. Nothing still. Sweat began to bead on his lip. If there was footsteps, and no one to see, that meant. Kyle froze. Camouflaged Elites.

The footsteps stopped. Kyle turned and came face to face with an Elite that was slowly revealing itself from camo.

"Shit."

The Elite gripped his neck; Kyle's BR55 rifle made a crash on the floor, and the creatures stubs that surrounded the creatures' mouth parted in a smile as a plasma rifle came point-blank to his face.

"Game over." Kyle gulped his last words.

The last thing he saw was a bright blob in his face.

Iso 'Kulamee dropped the halved faced marine on the floor in a mocking tone, disappearing into his camouflage he swept the remaining visible area with his plasma rifle before continuing to speak into his communicator "The connection is secure, we can begin our operations as planned."

"Excellent," a gruff voice of a Brute answered the transmission "Without the connection, the humans cannot reach each other in secrecy. Excellent work 'Kulamee, you may report to the surface and meet in the designated area."

"Thank you, Katarakt." 'Kulamee replied with distaste.

The Brute, Katarakt, was the second chief of the Brutes, took over the operation when the Elite commander had an "accident" of some sort. Kulamee knew well that the "accident" was Katarakt's doing, but, for the safety of his Elite's, kept his mouth shut. There was no need to die this early in domination.

He continued his sweep of the tunnel for several minutes, forming a hasty plan "Deploy my Elites a few miles away from the entrance of the canyon, they will enter at the collapsed wall and we will take the base at the far side, disabling their communication before they get a chance to call for help. After which we will use their own tunnels to attack from below."

"My Brutes will attack when your signal is given. We will ride over the base, make a short bombardment during deployment, then retreat to the forest cover."

"Excellent, if we proceed as planned, nothing should go askew," 'Kulamee replied, "I shall be counting on you."

"Very good," Katarakt snarled with mock pleasure "Very good indeed. You're Elites shall arrive in twenty minutes, can you wait until then?" the mocking still stayed.

"Twenty minutes is all I'll need," Kulamee replied, leaning on the wall. All of a sudden, the wall fell backward, like cardboard, making a muffled thud as it hit the dirt with 'Kulamee's combined body mass. Dust blew up like a smokescreen, 'Kulamee suppressed a cough, rolled over, then swept the area with his plasma rifle before proceeding. When 'Kulamee emerged, his head poked out into a cave with exits on either end.

He went to the lip of the cave and peeked around the corner. He could see just about the whole canyon, including the collapsed wall where his Elite's were to be deployed "I'm going to meet my Elite's at the lip of the canyon, tell them to look out for me."

"Very well." Katarakt replied.

'Kulamee turned on his camouflage and sprinted for the edge of the canyon.

Sniper Tyson Kerstin slowly stretched, yawned, and resumed looking

through his scope at x5 like he had been doing for the better part of the day. He itched his arm, glancing over at his other three companions that were completely focused on the area's they had been designated to scan. "Fucking zombiesâ€|" Tyson muttered.

He caught a quick glance of something somewhere, and fumbled with is rifle to catch it, but it that instant, the thing he thought he saw, disappeared, and all that remained was the empty plains of Coagulation. Tyson rubbed his eyes, trying to catch the object again. "Hmmm." Tyson grunted his interest was now piqued.

"What?" asked his companions in unison, all coming off their aimers at the exact same time.

"Nothing," Tyson replied "Nothing but shadows. Must be the heat."

'Kulamee cursed ducking behind a hill just before he was spotted. He hadn't realized that snipers had been positioned on the top of the base. Once again swearing at his lack of focus, he took a more stealthy approach to his destination. Flattening himself against the grass he started to roll over until the hill dipped into a small ditch. He gazed at the ditch, then the snipers. Seeing it as OK, he crouched/jogged through the trench, making sure to keep his head as low as possible without stumbling, he rolled over a quick incline and into another hole.

'Kulamee took in a large breathe of air before peering over the edge of the lip of the hole. Snipers still didn't suspect him. All was as planned. He glanced at the opening of the canyon where his Elites were to be deployed. Just above the trees he could see the bulbous Phantom drop ship, keeping lower than it should have been.

'Kulamee reluctantly thanked Katarakt for his cooperation. The remaining ground to cover was nothing but a field. 'Kulamee hesitated. If he were caught the operation would be a failure. Glancing at the snipers for a final time, 'Kulamee elongated his legs beyond their length and took off for the opening of the canyon. With nothing but grass to cover it would be an easy sprint. The wind howled past his camouflaged form, his feet seemed to hover over the ground as grass was crushed under his hooves.

The canyon edge was only a few yards away, but 'Kulamee could risk much more exposure; so he dived behind the cover of some jagged rocks a few feet from the lip of the canyon. The rocky cover would be excellent for his team's infiltration.

"I'm at the entrance, where is my team?" 'Kulamee demanded.

"Your team," Katarakt replied "is on their way, they should there momentarily."

As if on cue, seventeen mirage-like figures took place by his side "My lord, we are prepared for combat, all we require is your word."

"Excellent work my friend," 'Kulamee answered "If 'Putomee can establish a foothold to the north, and we establish ground here, we will have the successful amount of force to overcome this abomination!" he growled.

The Elites gave a hushed cheer "Let us show these infidels true power! We shall proceed stealthy until we reach the far side where their communications are linked as the barracks has many soldiers and we do not want to risk losing men this early in the operation."

"What about Katarakt's men?" asked an Elite "How do we know they won't ruin this operation?"

"I am fully aware of what he is most likely to do if we succeed or if we fail," 'Kulamee reasoned "I know he is worse than Tartarus the Brute chief-tan himself, but I know the council won't stand for it. Let us proceed!"

All seventeen Elites made a run towards the base dodging in and out of cover as they went. 'Kulamee smiled as the operation carried on.

"Sunnuvaâ€|. Arrrrgh!" Manne shouted in disbelief as he tossed the cards behind him "You still win even after that freaking hand? That is unbelievable."

Sinclair smiled "All luck." He said, pulling the pile of bullets further to his now enormous mountain of projectiles.

J.D. lifted himself up with a grunt "Well, I'm going to head topside for some fresh air." He said, whipping out a box of cigarettes.

Latvia snarled, "That's not fresh air you imbecile, that's death in a stick."

J.D. lit one as he went upstairs, calling back "Tastes like fresh air to me."

Latvia shook her head, standing up; I'm taking the tunnels to the other base. I need to check up on the techies anyhow. Catch you later- Hey, the lights short-circuited, I'll have to get them back in working order."

"I'm coming with you," Dante said, standing up "Kyle, hasn't reported in yet, I need to see if anything happened."

"Suit yourself." Latvia hopped into the tunnel with an SMG and a flashlight duct-taped to it.

Dante grabbed a few tools and an SMG then duct-taped a flashlight to it like Latvia had done. Walking to the edge of the tunnel, he saw the light from Latvia's flashlight lash back and forth. Hopping in he gripped the edge and held his head up, addressing Manne before he dropped "Do a search of the rest of the base, make sure everything is in working order. I think there's some trouble brewing."

"Roger." Manne replied.

PFC Latvia Canings proceeded in the dark tunnels knowing her way well. Her flashlight bobbed as he ran, flashing brief images of the worn metal around her. Taking in a quick breath, she stopped and allowed the higher-ranking officer to catch up. Lieutenant Dante

Sinclair halted next to her, not even gasping for air.

"Freak," Latvia said as she swept the area with her flashlight before looking back at him, brushing her dark hair from her face "How are you not tired yet?"

Dante glanced back the way they had come, and then looked back at her "You're kidding right? That's nothing compared to what I can actually run."

"Whatever," Latvia muttered, and began to search the wall for a dent "The damn box should be around here somewhereâ€| here!" she inserted her fingers into the dent, then pulled it open.

The worn metal opened, revealing a box with switches and wires in a jumbled bunch. Latvia scanned the wires quickly "Nothing's wrong. Must be the second electric box. Follow me." Her boots clanged on the metal as she walked further into the dark passage.

Dante was close on her heels. They went down the passage another thirty-meters before he stopped her with a firm grip on the shoulder, sniffing the air "It reeks of something in here," He said, walking past her "Hold here."

Latvia watched as the young man preceded only a meter or three, before his foot hit something soft. His flashlight shot down to the floor. Latvia gagged, and Dante's face hardened, whispering "Kyleâ€|"

On the floor was the halved face marine, his body dropped in a mangled heap. The right side of his face was burned away "Plasma burns," Dante snorted, "How the hell did they-"

"The crash," Latvia remembered the clanging noise she had heard when they were playing cards "It wasn't the tech's, it wasâ€| those bastard's snuck into our own _base_? How did they do it without anyone else noticing?"

"I dunno how, but I do give a damn. We didn't bring our helmets did we?"

"No, sir."

"Damn it! We have no comm link," Dante shouted, "We're more than halfway to the far base, we'll continue and warn them. Move, double time! I am so demoted for thisâ€| he muttered.

From now on, Dante Sinclair vowed that the marines evening routine as going to be_ much_ different.

â€|To Be Continued in Chapter 3: Interruption â€|

End
file.